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Bonita Unified Elementary School Teacher Honored by CUE for Volunteer Work in EdTech

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – Grace Miller Elementary School first-grade teacher April Maidens has been recognized with Computer-Using Educators’ (CUE) second annual Suzanne Mitchell Award, honoring her years of volunteer work for the nonprofit, which aims to advance student achievement through technology.

Maidens, a former Grace Miller student and Bonita High School alumna, has been a member of CUE’s planning committee since 2011, helping organize CUE’s annual conferences, working behind the scenes to schedule sessions, prepare speakers, talk to guests, and ensure that the events run smoothly.

“This is a tremendous honor and very special to me. Suzanne Mitchell and I worked together for many years. Suzanne brought me into the world of CUE volunteering and it’s wonderful to be able to share this moment with her,” Maidens said. “I enjoy volunteering because I like to help people. I want the people I work with to shine and be amazing. I dedicate this award to all my fellow volunteers.”

Maidens attended her first CUE conference in 1998. In 2009, she discovered she could get her registration fee waived if she volunteered. Maidens’ effervescence, ability to work the floor and engagement with stakeholders eventually caught the eye of Mitchell, who recommended her for the planning committee. Maidens joined the committee in 2011 and remained there until retiring from CUE earlier this year.

When Maidens attended her first CUE conference, her classroom had only one computer for the entire class. Listening to CUE speakers and viewing presentations, Maidens realized what a game-changer new technology could be, not just in her own classroom, but throughout her school.

“I never considered myself a techie, but at CUE I realized that this is where the future is headed, and it was in our best interests to incorporate as much of it as we could into our classrooms,” Maidens said. “I really enjoyed being at the conferences, meeting the people, seeing how their ideas developed over time. CUE is an amazing organization where everyone supports everyone else.”

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Maidens said she is especially thankful for technology tools that help level the playing field for struggling students. Text-to-speech apps help students with their comprehension skills and information retainment. Similarly, speech-to-text apps allows students to put their thoughts into words, and helps them understand the process of writing.

“I went into education because I struggled in school, and I can relate to what my kids are going through when they struggle,” Maidens said. “It’s a joy to be able to bring new ideas to the classroom and see how much it transforms students into learners.”

Maidens received her award at the 2024 CUE Spring Conference in Palm Springs, held in March. The Suzanne Mitchell Award honors the former CUE Board member and planning committee chairperson, who died in 2022.

“I can’t say enough about Mrs. Maidens, she truly goes above and beyond for her students,” Grace Miller Elementary Principal Leslie Sandoval said. “Mrs. Maidens works tirelessly to find new approaches to teaching, embracing technology that makes learning fun for her students, and delights in sharing what she’s found with her colleagues. I can’t think of someone more deserving of the CUE award.”

PHOTO:

BUSD_CUE_MAIDENS: Grace Miller Elementary School first-grade teacher April Maidens was recognized by Computer-Using Educators (CUE) with their second annual Suzanne Mitchell Award for her volunteer work. Maidens was a member of CUE’s conference planning committee from 2011 until her recent retirement from the organization, which aims to advance student achievement through technology.

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